

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Deputy Director for Science and Technology

FROM:

Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

SUBJECT: Language Career Enhancement

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This memorandum is a followup to our earlier conversation.

1. The attached outline of possible steps that could be taken to enhance the language career track within DDS&T (or the Agency generally) summarizes contributions from FBIS, OSO, and OTS. None of these items has been thoroughly staffed out at this point, but all of them in our judgment are both feasible and desirable. Regarding the development complement: It is worth noting that in its 19 September 1980 report on the CIA Language Incentive Program, NAPA recommended a larger development complement for the Agency as a whole. This was accepted by the DDCI on the favorable recommendation of the DDA and the Comptroller; however, they stated that budgetary considerations would preclude action until FY-83. Most of the other items proposed here also have money or position implications; hence, the Directorate would have to be prepared to move aggressively to identify and set aside the necessary resources for any elements adopted.

2. Although these proposals have been discussed with the training officers of OTS and OSO, they necessarily derive mainly from and are suited to the FBIS language career track. While OTS and OSO have no objection to any of them, they see most of them as having only limited application to their language functions and the kind of officer they need to perform them. They do, however, see indirect benefit to their offices in a program which strengthens the FBIS language career.

3. We have also attached a relevant article from the current U.S. News & World Report which contains useful background information.

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Attachments:

- A. Language Career Enhancement
- B. U.S. News & World Report article

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DDSGT/FBIS/PROD

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LANGUAGE CAREER ENHANCEMENT

1. Senior Linguist Positions

In consultation with OPPPM, establish within appropriate DDS&T components a limited number of higher-graded positions to provide promotion opportunities for specialists with rare language/substance skills without requiring them to take on supervisory or management responsibilities. Just as the Agency has senior analyst positions, so should it have language specialist positions if it hopes to attract and retain qualified people, especially in the rarer languages or skills combinations. The full performance level for language specialists is currently GS-12.

2. Extended Substantive Training

Since FBIS Foreign Documents Officers are not recruited solely for their language skills but also for their possession of a substantive discipline for which language is the necessary instrument, insure that each officer is given, at an early stage in his career but also at appropriate intervals thereafter, extended external training in his area of expertise at governmental and nongovernmental facilities. Examples: A 2-month detail to NASA for the officer working in Soviet space S&T developments; a similar detail to NIH for the officer working biomedical and behavioral sciences; details to appropriate U.S. companies working in cybernetics, automation and computers, and communications.

3. Sabbaticals

For linguists working in political science, electronics, economics and military disciplines, arrange with leading universities and technical institutions through OPPPM for one- and two-semester sabbaticals in studies programs related to their discipline or geographical area of concentration.

Recruitment4. Development Complement

Establish a small (12 positions) development complement within FBIS to enable it to provide language specialists for TDY or PCS assignments to OSO, DDO, and other components. FBIS is frequently called upon to provide such services and can do so only at the expense

of its primary open source collection/publication mission. It is not cost-effective for other components to staff for sporadic ad hoc needs. If they hire linguists for specific overseas assignments, there is not always useful employment for them when they return to Headquarters. If they are assigned to Headquarters jobs which do not involve use of their languages, their skill tends to deteriorate. With adequate positions, FBIS could recruit and train a complement of linguists to meet other offices' needs and could provide Headquarters tours for returnees, putting their language skills to productive use and sharpening their use of the languages. Availability of the LIP, especially the LUA, will be an attractive inducement to participate in the program.

5. Recruitment Trips

Increase recruitment trips by managers of foreign language programs in coordination with OPPPM Recruitment Division. Such visits to selected universities and colleges afford the opportunity to address heads of language departments and language students themselves on foreign-language career opportunities in the Agency--particularly in the S&T Directorate. Key promotional point in such trips is a description of the Language Incentive Program, particularly the Language Use Award (LUA).

6. Fellowships

Institute a program to encourage academic experts in hard-to-find languages or language/substance combinations to apply for a 1-year fellowship in specified Directorate components requiring these skills. Making such fellowships attractive would require appropriate salaries and incentives, to include the LUA.

7. Co-op Program

Establish a more focused co-op program with selected universities whereby students identified as possessing exceptional language skills combined with other substantive or professional interests would be encouraged to enter a work/study plan in which they would alternate work assignments with continued language study and agree to take courses in those disciplines most needed by the Directorate component involved. Upon graduation, the student would ideally become a staff employee.

8. Letters to Universities

A program of annual letters, signed by the DDS&T or preferably the DCI or DDCI, to chairmen of language departments, area studies programs, and professional schools within selected universities apprising them of current and anticipated needs for language skills and language/substance combinations: e.g., Russian with laser technology; Japanese with

microelectronics; Arabic or Polish with political science; French with electronics. Many foreign language departments, particularly at state universities, have difficulty persuading their state legislatures of the need for funding advanced programs in the less common languages--the ones most needed by the Agency. Funding is geared to enrollment, which has declined as job opportunities have dried up. Department heads have told Agency recruiters they could use information on Government job possibilities to make their case. In recent recruiting efforts FBIS in particular has found the LIP, especially the LUA, to be a drawing card. The Agency's annual letters would mention the LIP to underscore the value attached by the Agency to foreign language skills.

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The Bilingual American: Endangered Species

A nation of immigrants is losing its knack for foreign languages. The result is a crippling effect on business and diplomacy abroad.

America's ability to talk to the rest of the world in languages other than English is stammering to a halt.

Estimates are that only about 1 in every 50 native-born Americans is fluent in a second tongue, compared with 1 in every 5 Japanese who speaks a second language.

So widespread has ignorance of foreign languages become that the U.S. is finding it harder than ever to conduct diplomacy, compete in business and fill military and intelligence posts abroad.

Nearly two years after a presidential commission labeled the nation's linguistic incompetence "scandalous," there remains little enthusiasm in U.S. schools for French, Spanish, German, Russian and other modern languages.

"Today there are more teachers of English in the Soviet Union than there are students of Russian in the U.S.," says Representative Paul Simon (D-Ill.), author of *The Tongue-Tied American*, a book that advocates energetic federal support of language training.

Adds Simon: "We are doing almost nothing to promote fluency in the increasingly critical languages of Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Swahili, Urdu and Polish. Some 300 million people speak Hindi, but fewer than 300 Americans are studying that language."

The language gap has resulted in some embarrassing faux pas on the diplomatic and trade fronts. For example:

- Last September, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul did not have on hand any Russian-speaking officer able to question a Soviet soldier occupying Afghanistan who had sought asylum in the embassy. The incident was termed "inexcusable and outrageous" in a letter from 21 congressmen to Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie.

- When General Motors advertised its "Body by Fisher" car in Belgium, the slogan was described in Flemish as "Corpse by Fisher." In Spanish-speaking countries, car buyers avoided the Chevrolet Nova because "*No va*" in Spanish means "It doesn't go."

- In Taiwan, Pepsi-Cola bottlers used their "Come alive with Pepsi" ad-

vertising campaign until they realized the literal translation read, "Pepsi brings your ancestors back to life."

Such gaffes result from years of neglect of modern languages in the nation's schools. Only 15 percent of U.S. high-school students take a second language, and just 5 percent pursue these studies for more than two years, according to the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies.

At the elementary level, fewer than 1 percent of pupils get any foreign-language instruction, even though most educators agree that the early grades are the best time to begin learning a new language.

Language courses fell victim in the late 1960s to the campaign against required courses in the curriculum. "French, German and Russian suffered the most because they were seen as part of an elitist education," said Peter A. Eddy, former director of foreign-language education at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. "Students felt one didn't need a European veneer for living one's life out in the United States."

Another indication of the status of language studies: Eight percent of U.S. colleges now require foreign language for admission, compared with 34 percent in 1966.

"Even though we are a nation of immigrants, America has long regarded foreign-language study as expendable," says Richard I. Brod, director of foreign-language programs for the Modern Language Association. He predicts that "college language requirements will never come back except in the elite schools. Enrollments will not do at all well in the state colleges, teachers' colleges and the community colleges."

At City University of New York, a school that has long served sons and daughters of immigrants, demand for languages has dwindled to the point that professors of Russian and other Slavic languages now spend much of their time teaching remedial English.

Such trends worry American officials who agree with the presidential commission's finding that language deficiencies constitute a threat to national security and American economic interests overseas.



Grade schoolers drill in French. Early grades are best for language instruction, teachers say.

Representative Leon E. Panetta (D-Calif.), a longtime proponent of intense language training in schools, notes that the State Department no longer requires a Foreign Service candidate to have any knowledge of a second language. Intelligence leaders, he adds, are concerned that their agencies will not have enough linguists fluent in colloquial and idiomatic expressions to gather adequate information.

"We use a shotgun approach whenever a crisis arises," says Panetta. "Ten years ago all the services were teaching Vietnamese. We don't anticipate our language needs well."

Military deficiencies, too. The Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., recently reported an acute shortage of manpower in language billets. Over all, the armed forces are 2,382 persons short of the 9,933 language-qualified officers and enlisted personnel required.

Just as serious, in the view of many business and education leaders, is the cultural isolation that results from poor language abilities.

One recent study estimated that there were 10,000 English-speaking Japanese sales representatives in the United States, while fewer than 900 American counterparts were in Japan, and only a handful of those persons spoke Japanese.

A Japanese trade official, speaking to a group of business-school graduates, made the point this way: "Our Japanese business people study the language, the customs and cultures of the United States, Canada, Western Europe and Southeast Asia, and we have been extremely successful in selling our manufactured goods abroad because we understand the people and

their needs. Our people do not operate through interpreters. Your people must give greater consideration to the study of languages and customs of foreign lands, or you will lose in the competitive world markets."

A few schools and colleges are beginning to refocus attention on languages with success.

Hillcrest High School in Jamaica, N.Y., for instance, offers instruction in eight languages—including Hebrew, Chinese and Greek—and teaches a two-year career course to students intending to enter fields of international trade, tourism or diplomacy.

At the Harvard School in North Hollywood, Calif., 85 percent of the students study foreign languages. Students of Russian are paired with newly arrived émigrés of their own age. Students taking Spanish are working as instructors for the local chapter of the American Red Cross. French students tutor in a nearby elementary school and offer French cooking classes in the native tongue.

Such programs are described in a recent book entitled *Award-Winning For-*

ign Language Programs: Prescriptions for Success, a project of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Co-author Sandra B. Hammond says one key to good language programs is to develop links with native speakers so that students can use the language they are studying.

At the University of Akron, for example, students of German translate correspondence for local business firms and work as interpreters for the police and courts. The University of Hawaii found part-time jobs as tour guides for language students who wanted contact with foreign tourists.

Kansans abroad. In Topeka, Kans., nearly 300 high-school students have studied abroad under the auspices of a student-exchange program. Language instruction begins at the elementary level in Topeka and intensifies in the upper grades. While the school population in Topeka has dropped 17 percent since 1975, foreign-language enrollment has increased sharply.

College faculties are adapting their programs and teaching styles to today's media-oriented students. At Boston

College, Nancy Ruth Levy uses TV soap operas without the sound to encourage beginning Spanish students to make up their own dialogue.

Andrew G. Suozzo, Jr., assistant professor of French at the University of Texas, uses French TV commercials and menus from Paris to bring in contemporary grammar and usage. "The results aren't miraculous," says Suozzo, "but it gives students a coherent view of the culture whose language they have been studying for two years."

The road back to language sufficiency will be long and rigorous, educators say, because of the isolationist attitudes currently held by many Americans.

Representative Simon is among those who say that such isolation is a luxury we can no longer afford. He concludes: "If we don't have the national will to express ourselves in something other than the mother tongue, then we might as well erect a sign at each port of entry into the country reading, 'Welcome to the United States—we cannot speak your language.'"

By STANLEY N. WELLBORN



Latin students in Bowie, Md., feast in togas and also created bumper sticker.



Is your English in Ruins? TAKE LATIN!

An ancient tongue, Latin, is making a modest comeback in the curriculum as schools and colleges breathe new life into the dead language.

Classical studies have surged, say educators, because they help students understand the increasingly technical vocabularies of science, medicine, psychology and law. Moreover, studies show that Latin students score higher on college-entrance tests and have a better grasp of the English language.

"If kids take Latin, they find that

their English gets straightened out," says Kathleen Harmon, who teaches 170 Latin students at Bowie Senior High School in Bowie, Md.

Climbing enrollments have resulted in a nationwide shortage of Latin teachers, particularly in high schools, says the National Coordinating Office for Latin and Greek at Cleveland State University.

At the turn of the century, half of all high-school students took classical languages. That total fell to less than 1 percent in the 1970s, largely be-

cause of Latin's reputation as being "dreary and irrelevant," reports the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

To promote the subject, teachers have replaced tired military histories with livelier readings from Ovid, Catullus and Petronius, and are using such books as *I, Claudius* to spark classroom interest.

Hundreds of elementary schools have introduced Latin to inner-city pupils who read English below grade level. Philadelphia offers Latin to 16,000 students in grades four to six. Los Angeles started similar classes four years ago to help Spanish-speaking pupils learn English. In Ohio, Latin enrollment has jumped about 90 percent since 1978.

Gregory Staley, classics professor at the University of Maryland, says that enrollment in classics has grown 30 percent at that school, 20 percent at the University of Southern California and 40 percent at the University of Florida.

"Latin is useful because it allows a student to step outside English and acquire a linguistic instinct," says Mary Ann Burns, president of the American Classical League. "That inevitably facilitates learning of other languages."